

A star's amazing confession:

"DON'T FORGET TO REMEMBER ME"—the latest single from the Bee Gees—is said to be a sort of ode to Jim Reeves, but it sounds much more like a self-dedication to Maurice Gibb.

You haven't forgotten to remember Maurice, have you? He's the one who keeps his mouth shut while Barry blasts away and Robin rebels. He's the one who has a beard and married Lulu and plays practically every instrument on Bee Gees recording sessions—but you'd never know it. Nobody seems to want to know much about Maurice.

"I was always the one left behind," he says of himself. "Out in the streets, people would point and say 'That's Robin with the big teeth' and 'That's Barry, the good-looking leader of the group,' but when they saw me they'd simply say 'That's just one of the Bee Gees.' But at least I ended up with the best-looking wife.

"No one knew me until I met my wife. Even Lulu's mother used to ask, 'Which one is Maurice?' For six months after we were going out she thought Lulu was dating Barry.

"In Birmingham last week where Lu was appearing in cabaret, we went into a shop and a woman came up and asked Lu for her autograph. Then she turned to me and said, 'Yours too, Barry'. This happened again five times before the day was out.

"I'm sure people in faraway places like Dundee are quite convinced she married Barry. Stands to reason she'd marry the best looking guy in the group."

It obviously niggles, but he is far too easy-going a guy to let it get him down to any serious degree. He would, however, like a little more recognition in the artistic sense.

"I was always the sexy bass player in the background—while Robin stood centre, Barry and I played it up a bit, gave 'em a bit of thigh—and I've never had the opportunity to prove on TV that I could play the piano.

"I'm quite proud of my piano playing and I had a good chance to express it on 'First Of May'. What happened? Robert (Stigwood), our manager, decided that since Barry did the singing, we couldn't have Robin standing there doing nothing, so he sat at the piano and pretended to play while I was back on bass again. I mean to say, Robin's never played a note on the piano at our recording sessions. So I just wish I could be appreciated musically now."

"Odessa," of course, was around the time of the big rift with Robin. Barry blew his top—and repeated to do so for the following three months. Maurice merely became the "three wise monkeys" rolled into one, hearing, seeing and speaking no evil.

"Robin had always wanted to go solo, so when it happened I wasn't really angry at all. I simply understood the situation. But Barry is so full

Why so few people know who I am, by Bee Gee Maurice

of pride and just couldn't understand why Robin had done it. I suppose being his twin made me understand Robin that much more easily, anyway.

"So the silence between us went on and Barry went on blasting away—he blasts away much better than me, in any case—and recently I saw that Robin was appearing on 'Top Of The Pops' and I'd heard that he was a bit sorry to find he was losing contact with his brothers so I rang the studio and asked to speak to him. They wouldn't let me. I said, 'This is ridiculous—Man's just got on the Moon and yet I can't even speak on the phone to my twin brother!'

"But a couple of hours later there was a knock on the door and there was Robin, saying he'd heard I'd been trying to contact him. So we embraced, all emotional, sat down and had a drink and later we went round and Robin reunited with Barry like nothing had happened."

Despite the fact that it was only a few weeks ago in Disc that Barry declared: "If Robin walks back into the

group, I walk out," he has changed his mind. The Gibb brothers really are reunited.

"For myself," says Maurice, "I'd love Robin to come back to the Bee Gees. Whether it will happen we'll have to wait and see. It's rather premature to pose that question."

His tolerant attitude towards Robin's departure is also reflected in his opinion of the often outrageous outpourings of big brother Barry.

"Barry's blast-offs don't bother me, purely because half of what he says doesn't really mean anything. What I mean is that what he says is true, but he exaggerates it.

"He has the chance to say more because he has most of the interviews—and he doesn't let you down, does he! When Lu and I announced we were getting married and he turned round and announced in Disc that we were too young, I simply said, 'Look, Barry, we're in love and we're getting married whatever you think. If anyone had said you were too young when you got married, you wouldn't have listened to brotherly advice either.'"



Maurice and wife Lulu: "Even her mother used to ask: 'Which one is Maurice?'"

Of the big-star image Barry is so careful to cultivate (inside his home he's down-to-earth and totally different), Maurice admits: "I think we have to act like stars because it is expected of us. So we drive our big cars and live in our smart houses (he and Lulu move into a house in upper-class Hampstead at the start of September). Barry seems to be more flamboyant again merely because he gets more interviews to talk about it."

But one time when Barry—and Maurice—have not so much to say is in the choice of their singles. "Don't Forget To Remember," like all the others, was the decision of manager Stigwood. The song has surprised a lot of people, for it is far removed from the Bee Gees style, being country and western in concept com-

plete with Barry vocalising in a Jim Reeves voice. Even the B-side—"The Lord"—leaves the Bee Gees bag, for the clear impression here is of Johnny Cash.

"The thing is," says Maurice, "that it is Jim Reevesish, it's rather like 'Oh Lonesome Me' and that sort of song, and you'll never forget the melody. It wasn't a deliberate dedication to Jim Reeves—it just worked out that way."

Aside of the new single and album, however, Barry and Maurice have been busily putting the finishing touches to their TV fantasy film "Cucumber Castle," filming for which started at Stanmore, Middlesex, on Monday.

So, when you see it, please don't forget to remember that Maurice is the one with the beard.

Bob Farmer